

The Coasters.

Up and down the coast from Calais to the keys,
We have groped with land and log
Through the easter and the fog,
Felt the sting of hail or whistled for a breeze,
Till we know the charted coast
Like the face we love the most.
With the old "blue pigeon" tracking
down the seas.

When the stars are in the sky we closely pass,
Sailing by within a league,
Barnegat and Chincoteague,
But we give a wider berth to Hatteras;
For she sits among the dunes
Like a siren playing tunes,
All too quick to change a jig to dirge
or mass.

When the fog is like a wall upon our lee,
And the capes have closed the door,
Through the murk we safely bore,
While the off shore sailors blunder back to sea.
Through a ram's horn or a gourd
With the lead we lay our board,
Little matter what the fog or night
might be.

Loading slowly down the coast with drag-
ging sheet,
Carrying on to make a berth
When the thunder rocks the earth
And the leveled rains against our faces beat.
We have waited, we have won,
In the storm and in the sun,
Not to vaunt in conquest, grovel in de-
feat.

We will hazard all with any gale that blows,
Slipping out of port at night
When the storm flags flap with fright
And the sea is gray with long wind
driven rows,
When the decks are running free
Braver road there could not be;
What if Death should bar us from its
happy close?

Gales will rage about us, toppling seas
downpour;
Hurling scud and driving sleet
Shift the deck beneath our feet,
Snatch the canvas from us, deafened by
its roar.
Blind to all but duty, we
Hold the course we cannot see,
Flash a last thought homeward, pass
the open door.
—L. Frank Tooker in the Outlook.

VIRGINIA'S COMRADE-SHIP

Hilliard turned courteously at Lydia Denning's summons.

"Will you be so kind as to run up to Ted's den and get the book?" she asked. "Then we can settle the question." Hilliard accepted the commission, as befitted Ted's friend and a fellow who was often at the house. He went upstairs and knocked at the door of the den. Expecting no response, he immediately pushed it open. At the same moment a head with a mop of brown curls tied into a bunch at the back lifted itself from above a big book, a pair of brilliant brown eyes looked up into Hilliard's, and Virginia's face broke into a smile as he stood smiling back.

"Oh, come in," she cried. "Why are you up here? Aren't you having a good time?"

"A charming time," he answered without hesitation, for Virginia was the younger daughter of the house. "Why are you not downstairs? When



Brilliant brown eyes, are you going to be old enough to come to Miss Lydia's parties?"

"Never, I hope," declared the girl, her red lips scornfully. "Do you really like them? They sound so stupid

to me. Think of staying in the house to dance when you might be out coasting or skating! Now, I've been coasting—just came in. Such fun!"

Hilliard sat down upon the arm of Ted's big chair. "Tell me about it," he requested. "In the first place—who took you?"

Virginia closed her book and came around to drop among Ted's sofa pillows, six feet away. She wore her skating dress, yet, he saw; an ankle-length, fur bordered, gray affair, with a touch of scarlet which set off her dark young beauty effectively.

"Oh, I went with our set," she explained. "It was magnificent. I shouldn't have made Kent bring me in so early if I hadn't forgotten all about Lydia's party."

"But really," he insisted, "when are you coming out?"

"Why, that is a thing that's dependent on several others," declared the girl. "In the first place, I'm in no hurry. In the second place, Lydia's in no—" She stopped abruptly, looking up at him with a shake of the head. "I don't mean that," she added quickly.

Hilliard nodded. "I understand. I was sure you must be—well, nearly 18, at least."

"I am—19—at most," she admitted. "If I should put my hair up, you'd see."

"And they're keeping you back on your sister's account?"

"That's all right," she said defiantly. "It does make a girl seem older to have a big younger sister around. And, besides, I really want to stay a girl as long as I can. I hate to put my hair up and my skirts quite down. I don't care a straw for dressing up and going to receptions and teas and parties. Lydia loves it. I love coasting and skating and riding and swimming, and all the rest of it."

"So do I," he said heartily, "and it's a long while since I was 19."

She looked at him critically. "Yes, I should think you must be about 35. No, you can't be, because you were at college with Ted."

He laughed. "Not quite that," he said. "It won't be long before I am, though. But I should like coasting as well as ever. I wish I had been out with—your party—to-night. It's years since I've coasted."

Virginia's eyes turned longingly toward the windows. "It's a heavenly night," she said. "Let's go!" She looked at him, smiling daringly.

He stared at her for a minute, then he leaped to his feet with a laugh. "Come on," he cried, under his breath. "There's nothing I'd like to do better. But how shall we manage it?"

"I didn't really mean it," said Virginia; "but if you do we might have just one coast, and nobody would miss you. We'll slip down the side staircase, and Lucian's bobs are where we can get them."

"I'll tell you," said Hilliard rapidly, his eyes dancing. "I'll just take this book down to your sister, mix in the crowd, slip away in ten minutes, and then we'll be free—see?"

This plan was carried out. The two stole silently away from the house, and in ten minutes more were at the suburban hill, where a few joyful coasters still lingered.

"Can you steer?" demanded Virginia.

"Unless I've grown old faster than I feel as if I had, I can—sure."

He took his place, she started the bobs, and flung herself on behind them. It was a long, swift, breathless flight, and then they stood at the bottom and looked at each other, laughing.

They sailed down the hill again and again, until Virginia realized the daring of this unauthorized, unchaperoned performance. Hilliard never hated to do anything in his life so much as he hated to put up those bobs and go in. He lingered in the shadow of the side entrance. He pulled off his glove and held out his hand.

"It's the best fun I've had in a dozen blue moons," he said enthusiastically.

She nodded, smiling. He retained her hand for a moment, then he gently drew off the scarlet silk mitten.

"I don't like to shake hands with a good comrade with gloves on," he explained. She let him have the warm firm little hand a moment—a very short one—drew it demurely away.

"Good night, Mr. Hilliard," she said. "I've enjoyed it, too."

"Miss Virginia," he urged, taking a step after her, "I've a favor to ask of you. Couldn't you—wouldn't your sister be willing for you to appear at her evenings now?"

"This is nicer—and so is all the rest of my world. Lydia's too much indoors. I don't like to wear my best clothes, Mr. Hilliard."

"Try it. It's more fun than you think. Come down next time—please, Miss Virginia. I can't grow young again and get back into your world. You could put up your hair and put on a trailing skirt and—come into my world. Miss Virginia—"

"I really must go." She was on the top step, her hand on the door. But she could not escape him. He was at her side in two leaps.

"I should like to be in the same world with you," he said rapidly. "Miss Virginia, come down next time—will you? It will just mean that you



"Tell me, wasn't it so?" are willing to be friends—comrades—in the same world. You don't know how long I've been waiting for you to get old enough for that."

She was gone before the words were fairly finished. Presently he was back in the hot rooms and the crowd, a faint flush on his smooth cheek, and a singular sparkle in his eyes.

When at last Lydia entertained again, Hilliard found himself entering the crowded rooms at the Dennings' with a quicker pulse than any social affairs had ever caused him. As the evening drew to a close and no Virginia came, he blamed himself for an unwary hunter who had been following his game down the wind.

"Louis," said Ted Denning's voice in his ear, just as he had made up his mind to go dejectedly home, "come up to my den for a minute, will you—or—run up first, and I'll be along. I've something I want to show you."

Willingly enough, Hilliard escaped to seek the familiar spot. He opened the door unceremoniously; then stopped, with a rush of warm blood to his heart. With a little cry of discomfited surprise Virginia tried to pass him, but his tall, broad-shouldered figure filled the doorway, and he stood determinedly still.

But was this Virginia—this lovely woman with the blushing face, the sweet, bare neck and the trailing white garments? A transformed and glorified Virginia, then! He stared at her, a joyful smile breaking over his grave face. But with her head bent down pulling a filmy scarf over her shoulders, she was imploring like a frightened child who has been caught at mischief.

"Please let me go by, Mr. Hilliard. I was not going down stairs—really I was not. I just dressed up for fun—for Ted to see. I—it was just for fun—"

"You didn't do it for me, then?" He would not stand aside an inch. He felt with a thrill that her sudden intense shyness was far more significant

than her appearance down stairs would have been. The thought swept him off his feet.

"I always liked to dress up," she breathed. "It's a childish trick."

"You told me you hated your best clothes."

"I do!"—vehemently.

"Then why did you put them on?"

"I—you—Mr. Hilliard!" She raised her head and tried to meet his look with dignity, but the lashes fell before the light in his eyes.

"Virginia!"—he took a step forward and bent to whisper the words—"you did do it for me, only you didn't dare come down. Tell me, wasn't it so? You were willing to be comrades after all—just comrades for awhile, Virginia—till you get used to it," he added, under his breath.

Ted's step was on the stairs. Hilliard turned and closed the door behind him; he set his foot against it. Virginia looked up appealingly—and found herself for one breathless moment in his arms.

"Just comrades—till you get used to it, darling," he repeated softly, "and then, more—more!"

"Hello, old man!" called Ted, outside. "Did you find it?"

"Yes, I found it," answered his friend's voice, with a happy laugh. "Come in."

Her First Railway Trip.

An old lady on her first railroad trip remarked the bell cord overhead, and, turning to a boy, she pointed to the cord and said:

"Sonny, what's that for?"

"That, marm," he said, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "is to ring the bell when you want anything to eat."

Shortly afterward the old lady reached her umbrella up to the cord and gave it a vigorous pull. The whistle sounded, the brakes were put on, the train began to slacken its speed, windows were thrown up, questions asked and confusion reigned among the passengers. The old lady sat calmly through it all, little dreaming that she was the cause of the excitement.

Presently the conductor came rushing through the train and asked:

"Who pulled the bell?"

"I did," replied the old lady, meekly.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped the official, impatiently.

"Well," said the old lady, meditatively, "you may bring me some ham sandwiches and a cup of tea, if you will."

The Irishman's Answer.

"The son of the Emerald Isle will get in his work," declares Private John Allen, whose stock of good stories never runs low. "Patrick O'Flanagan and a good fellow named Sanders, the latter a great fighter in his day and who was at the time this story was born in the employ of Justice of the Peace Shook, before whom the two men were arraigned on a charge of breach of the peace."

"O'Flanagan and Sanders had been engaged in a scrap, a set-to which was called in those days a 'fast and skull.' The evidence had been submitted and it was clear that both parties were at fault, but O'Flanagan more to blame than Sanders. The Irishman was fined a ten spot and Sanders got off with a five. O'Flanagan didn't relish this, and complained to the justice that he had shown partiality to his employee."

"I would have you know, sir," snapped the justice angrily, "that I would neither respect Neptune for his trident nor Jupiter for his thunder."

"An' are ye shure," answered Pat, "ye wouldn't git on yer knaze to Bacchus for his whisky?"—Washington Times.

Plan to Admit Chinese.

A new scheme has just been devised in California for amending the Chinese exclusion act. It proposes to permit Chinese laborers to come to the country, but to forbid them going to the cities and to permit them to remain only from three to four years,